

Application No.: 09/912,854
Amendment Dated: December 8, 2004
Reply to Office Action of: September 8, 2004

MTS-3264US

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-26. (Cancelled).

27. (Currently Amended) A method of purchasing an appliance consuming electric power comprising the steps of:

(a) obtaining by a user, from an appliance provider, ~~the appliance provider being separate from an electric power provider~~, an appliance at a special purchase price using a web page provided through a first communication line by a web page providing means of the appliance provider;

(b) operating by the user the appliance obtained in step (a);

(c) measuring by a power management means installed at the home of the user, the value of the electric power consumed by the appliance when operating in step (b);

(d) transmitting, through a second communication line, which is a communication line separate from the first communication line, from an automatic measurement means installed at the home of the user, the measurement value of the electric power consumed in step (c) to a computer database of an electric power provider;

(e) accumulating in the computer database the amount of power measured in step (c);

(f) charging after installation of the appliance, the user by the electric power provider based on the accumulation in the computer database a predetermined fee for the amount of power accumulated in step (e) at a higher rate than a previous rate charged by the electric power provider for consumed electricity; and

(g) providing, by the electric power provider, through a third communication line which is a communication line separate from both the first communication line and the

second communication line, based on the accumulation in the computer database, a portion of the calculated fee charged to the user in step (f) directly to the separate appliance provider to offset the special purchase price in step (a).

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 in which step (a) includes obtaining, from the appliance provider, the appliance at the special purchase price that is lower than a previous purchase price of the appliance; and

step (f) includes charging the user the predetermined fee for the amount of power accumulated in step (e) at a higher rate than a conventional rate charged by the electric power provider for consumed electricity.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 in which step (c) includes installing a power management unit at the location of the appliance operating in step (b) to measure the power consumed by the appliance, and

step (g) includes providing another portion of the calculated fee charged to the user to an installer of the power measurement unit.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 in which step (c) includes measuring the value of the electric power consumed by the appliance, when operating in step (b), separately from power consumed by other appliances being operated by the user.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein

step (f) includes setting the predetermined fee in advance; and

step (c) includes detecting an amount of electric power consumed by the appliance.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein

step (b) includes operating the appliance for carrying out a predetermined operation by consuming electric power, and

operating the appliance in an energy saving mode for reducing the consumed electric power.

Application No.: 09/912,854
Amendment Dated: December 8, 2004
Reply to Office Action of: September 8, 2004

MTS-3264US

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the appliance includes an energy saving controller; and

step (a) includes obtaining by the user the appliance from the appliance provider and obtaining the energy saving controller from another provider, the other provider being different from the appliance provider; and

step (g) includes providing by the electric power provider a portion of the calculated fee to at least one of the appliance provider and the other provider.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein

step (e) includes storing information regarding a degree of energy savings of the appliance, and

step (f) includes determining the predetermined fee based on the degree of energy savings of the appliance.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein

step (d) includes preparing measurement information of the value of the electric power consumed and information of a degree of the energy savings of the appliance, and

transmitting the information via a network.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein

step (b) includes installing the appliance, an automatic power measuring device for measuring the value of the electric power consumed by the appliance, and an energy saving controller at the home of the user, and

step (e) includes installing a device for accumulating the amount of power measured in the database at a location of the electric power provider.

37. (Currently Amended) A method of purchasing an appliance consuming electric power comprising the steps of:

- (a) obtaining by a user, from an appliance provider, ~~the appliance provider being separate from an electric power provider~~, an appliance operable in either (a) a first mode using a previous rate charged by the electric power provider for the amount of power consumed by the appliance, or (b) a second mode using a higher rate than the previous rate charged by the electric power provider for the amount of power consumed by the appliance by using a web page provided through a first communication line by a web page providing means of the appliance provider;
- (b) operating by the user the appliance obtained in step (a) in the second mode;
- (c) measuring by a power management means installed at the home of the user, the value of the electric power consumed by the appliance when operating in step (b);
- (d) transmitting, through a second communication line which is a communication line separate from the first communication line from an automatic measurement means installed at the home of the user, the measurement value of the electric power consumed in step (c) to a computer database of an electric power provider;
- (e) accumulating in the computer database the amount of power measured in step (c);
- (f) charging, after installation of the appliance, the user by the electric power provider, based on the accumulation in the computer database a predetermined fee for the amount of power accumulated in step (e) at the higher rate than the previous rate charged by the electric power provider for consumed electricity;
- (g) providing, by the electric power provider through a third communication line which is a communication line separate from both the first communication line and the second communication line, based on the accumulation in the computer database, a portion of the calculated fee charged to the user in step (f) directly to the separate appliance provider to offset a special purchase price provided to the user for operating the appliance in the second mode, and
- (h) providing the user the special purchase price for obtaining the appliance from the appliance provider, the special purchase price being lower than a previous purchase price of the appliance.

Application No.: 09/912,854
Amendment Dated: December 8, 2004
Reply to Office Action of: September 8, 2004

MTS-3264US

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 wherein
step (c) includes detecting that the user is operating the appliance in the second mode.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 wherein the appliance includes an energy saving controller; and

step (a) includes obtaining by the user the appliance from the appliance provider and obtaining the energy saving controller from another provider, the other provider being different from the appliance provider; and

step (g) includes providing by the electric power provider a portion of the calculated fee to at least one of the appliance provider and the other provider.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 wherein

step (e) includes storing information regarding a degree of energy savings of the appliance, and

step (f) includes determining the predetermined fee based on the degree of energy savings of the appliance.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 wherein

step (d) includes preparing measurement information of the value of the electric power consumed and information of a degree of the energy savings of the appliance, and

transmitting the information via a network.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 wherein

step (b) includes installing the appliance, an automatic power measuring device for measuring the value of the electric power consumed by the appliance, and an energy saving controller at the home of the user, and

step (e) includes installing a device for accumulating the amount of power measured in the database at a location of the electric power provider.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 including the step of:

displaying at the home of the user the predetermined fee for the amount of power accumulated at the higher rate than the previous rate charged by the electric power provider for the consumed electricity.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 37 wherein

step (b) includes sensing presence of a human body in the home of the user, and operating the appliance after sensing the presence of the human body.

45. (New) A power consumption system comprising:

a terminal apparatus connected to a first communication line, used by a user;

a manufacturer side system of a manufacturer that sells a special price apparatus which is set in advance so as to consume power at a special price, the manufacturer side system having a web page providing means connected to said first communication line, providing a web page for receiving an order of said special price apparatus from said terminal apparatus through said first communication line;

a power management means installed at the home of said user, detecting that a user is utilizing said special price apparatus and measuring the amount of power consumed by said special price apparatus if the user has purchased and is utilizing said special price apparatus;

an automatic measurement means installed at the home of said user, transmitting measured amount of power consumed to a second communication line, which is a communication line separate from said first communication line;

a power company side system in a management center of a power company, having a database for accumulating said measured amount of power consumed which is transmitted from said automatic measurement means through said second communication line, a fee charging means charging a fee for said measured amount of power consumed which is accumulated in said database by making an addition to the fee at a higher rate than a rate for power consumed of other appliances used by said user, and payment means paying at least a part of said added fee to said manufacturer that has sold said special price

Application No.: 09/912,854
Amendment Dated: December 8, 2004
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MTS-3264US

exclusive apparatus through a third communication line, which is a communication line separate from both said first communication line and said second communication line.

46. (New) A program for a computer comprising:

a web page providing means providing a web page for receiving an order of a special price apparatus from a terminal apparatus through a first communication line;

a power management means detecting that a user is utilizing said special price apparatus and measuring the amount of power consumed by said special price apparatus if the user has purchased and is utilizing said special price apparatus;

an automatic measurement means transmitting said measured amount of power consumed to a second communication line which is a communication line separate from said first communication line;

a database accumulating said measured amount of power consumed which is transmitted from said automatic measurement means through said second communication line,

a fee charging means charging a fee for said measured amount of power consumed which is accumulated in said database by making an addition to the fee at a higher rate than a rate for power consumed by other appliances;

and a payment means paying at least a part of said added fee to said manufacturer that has sold said special price apparatus through a third communication line which is a communication line separate from both said first communication line and said second communication line.